

The Ancient Creeds in Modern Life

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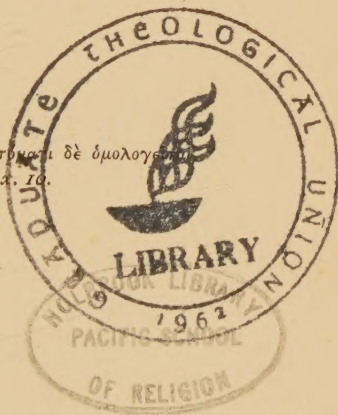
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THE ANCIENT CREEDS IN MODERN LIFE

A LECTURE GIVEN TO THE CAMBRIDGE LOCAL
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καρδίᾳ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην, στόματι δὲ ὁμολογεῖται
εἰς σωτηρίαν.—*Rom. x. 10.*



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THE ANCIENT CREEDS IN MODERN LIFE

THE Christian Church will soon enter on the twentieth century of her existence. No other institution of equal importance can claim so long a history. The society which was founded by Jesus Christ and His Apostles in the first century is with us to-day, not as a moribund or decadent body which has spent its strength and is a mere survival of a past age, but in the full vigour of a life mellowed by the experience of age but free from its infirmities. At the present moment the Church is everywhere lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes. As fast as new regions are opened up to Western enterprise, the Church of the West presses in to capture them for Christ ; when old countries are stirred by a craving for Western knowledge, the Church is at hand to offer them the Gospel. At home she

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is busy with the study of new social and intellectual problems, which she brings into the light of the Christian revelation ; new discoveries are pressed into the service of Christian thought, new movements supply fresh fields for Christian work. The oldest of living organizations is among the most enterprising ; the Church seems to be ever starting anew upon her original mission of converting and saving the world. In modern life she meets us everywhere. Many modern men, it is true, neglect her ministrations, and ignore or refuse her teaching ; but her most resolute adversary cannot shut his eyes to her existence, or to the abundant vitality by which she challenges attention in every land.

The Church, then, is a factor in modern life which cannot be overlooked ; as she has, of all great modern institutions, the longest history, so, there is reason to think, she is the most permanent spiritual force which is amongst us to-day. She is rapidly adapting herself to the changed and changing conditions in which she now has to work. But in adapting herself to modern ways of thinking and acting, she is far from abandoning the old. She possesses doctrines, sacraments, orders, creeds, which have come down from those

far-off days when the faith of Christ had scarcely made its way beyond the shores of the Mediterranean ; and she holds tenaciously by these heir-looms, and carries them with her to-day to the far East, and wherever she goes. The question is often asked whether there can be any place in our modern world for these relics of ancient Christianity ; what functions they can fulfil in our own age, or in times to come ? Would it not be expedient for modern Christians to shake themselves free from these survivals of the early centuries ?

In this lecture I shall try, so far as time permits, to answer these questions in regard to the ancient Creeds, or rather in regard to the two Creeds which are familiar to us all, the Apostles' and the Nicene.

I. We must, first of all, endeavour to realize the circumstances in which these two Creeds had their origin, and the purpose they were meant to fulfil.

The Apostles' Creed (so called) is, in fact, a very venerable form of baptismal confession. Even in the Apostolic age some brief confession of faith was required from new converts before they were admitted to the Church by Baptism.

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Timothy, who was baptized, as it appears, during St. Paul's first mission, before the middle of the first century, had "confessed the good confession in the sight of many witnesses." * The earliest form of words was doubtless simple in the extreme, such as that which the "Western" text of Acts places in the mouth of the Ethiopian eunuch, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," † or the still more succinct creed cited more than once by St. Paul, "Jesus is Lord." ‡ But as soon as it became usual to administer Baptism in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, the baptismal confession naturally took the three-fold form to which we are accustomed. Such, it is known, was the Creed of the Roman Church about the middle of the second century. Those were the days of the Antonines, when, though the savage brutality of Nero and the "sudden and repeated" § assaults of Domitian were memories of the past, the Roman Church was still liable at any moment to a fresh outbreak of persecution, if popular clamour or the whim of the Emperor demanded it. Yet new converts were continually

* 1 Tim. vi. 12.

† Acts viii. 36.

‡ Rom. x. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 3; Phil. ii. 11.

§ Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. i.

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offering themselves for baptism. They were brought by the congregation to "a place where was water," * a bath perhaps within the catacomb where the Church assembled for worship, and there, as we are told by Justin, who had doubtless witnessed the scene, they "were regenerated," born into the new life of Christ, bathing in the water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And either at the font or before they came to be baptized, each of these new Christians confessed his faith in the words of the Roman Creed. The words can be restored with a fair degree of certainty. "I believe," he said, "in God the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried, rose the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father; whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the holy Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh."

* *Apol.* i. 61. ἔγονται ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐνθα ὕδωρ ἐστί, καὶ . . . ἀναγεν-
νῶνται ἐπ' ὀνόματος γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς . . . καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου τὸ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τότε λουτρὸν ποιοῦνται.

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You will recognize in these words a shorter form of our present baptismal creed. The additions which were made at a later time by other Western Churches are not very material; the bulk of the Creed as we say it to-day was, there is reason to believe, what was said by Roman Christians and taught to the candidates for baptism in the middle of the second century, when to confess the faith of Christ was to run the risk of being beheaded, or thrown to the wild beasts to make a Roman holiday.

The so-called Nicene Creed differs widely from the Apostles' Creed both in origin and purpose. It belongs not to the second century, but to the fourth; it comes to us not from the age of persecution, but from that which witnessed the triumph of Christianity over paganism, the peace of the Church, and the conversion of the Roman world. It is not a brief summary of the Christian faith, as opposed to Judaism and to heathen religions, but a full statement of the *credenda* of the religion of Christ as illuminated by a longer Christian experience, and distinguished from heretical perversions of Apostolic teaching. The Apostles' Creed was an exclusively Western form; the "Nicene" Creed is

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Eastern in type and Catholic in use, accepted and recited by East and West alike.

The Creed we call Nicene is in fact the Creed of Constantinople, the New Rome of Constantine, as the Creed we call Apostles' is the Creed of Old Rome in days before the new capital was founded. The Creed of Constantinople, now known as Nicene, is an enlargement of the ancient baptismal Creed of Jerusalem, embodying the most important clauses of the true Creed of Nicæa, and certain other doctrinal clauses relating to the Holy Ghost. Thus it sums up the results of the two great victories which the Catholic Church in the fourth century won over Arianism, affirming the Godhead of the Son, which was maintained by the Council of Nicæa in 325, and the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, which was maintained by the Council of Constantinople in 381. On those two points, therefore, the Creed of Constantinople goes far beyond the statements of the Roman Creed. The simple confession of faith in Christ Jesus as "the only Son of God" is expanded in the Constantinopolitan Creed into the magnificent sentence: "begotten of the Father before all worlds, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, of one

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substance with the Father ; by whom all things were made.” * Similarly it adds to the simple confession of faith in the Holy Ghost : “ the Lord, the Giver of life, that proceedeth from the Father, that together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.” † There is, indeed, nothing which is really new in either of these additions, for the man who says, “ I believe in God the Father . . . and in His only Son . . . and in the Holy Ghost,” practically confesses the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, since he recognizes that the Three Persons have an equal claim on his faith and service. But what the second century creed had taught implicitly, the creeds of the fourth century made so explicit as to leave no room for doubt.

Like the Apostles' Creed in the West, the Creed of Constantinople is in the East the creed of Baptism. Each catechumen is required to repeat it before he is baptized. Even in the West it appears for a time to have superseded at baptisms the use of the Western form. But its

* τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ· δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο.

† τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον.

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more appropriate place is in the service of the Eucharist, where it is now used both in East and West. For use at the font, as we Westerns think, the short and simple Creed of the second century is the more appropriate; at the altar, where baptized Christians celebrate the deepest mysteries of their religion, there is singular fitness in reciting the fuller confession which is the product of a more mature theology.

The elementary Creed is suited to the needs of the new convert, or the little child receiving its first lesson in the faith. The more advanced Creed known to us as Nicene, the Creed of Constantinople, calls for the matured faith, the riper Christian understanding, which may be expected in communicant members of the Church.

2. Such is the history of the two great Creeds of Christendom, and such their present use in the historical Churches—the Orthodox, the Roman, and the Anglican. We come now to the question raised by this use. Is it right, is it expedient, that the modern Church should still require from its members these ancient confessions of faith? Might they not with advantage be dropped altogether, or at least be revised and brought into

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greater conformity with modern ideas and beliefs ?

No student of history or of institutions can fail to recognize the interest and importance of Christian documents which have come down to us, the one from the second century, the other from the fourth ; the one from the age of persecution and the worship of the catacombs, the other from the age which witnessed the Church's conquest, first of paganism, and then of heresy. No Christian student can handle without veneration confessions of the Christian faith, which have been recited by long generations of believers at Baptism or at the Eucharist. They have been consecrated for him by their use at the most solemn moments of life by millions of his fellow Christians who are gone to God. No form of words that the wisdom of the modern Church could devise, would strike the imagination or lift the heart as these can do. We find these ancient, time-honoured forms in possession, and the reasons must be strong indeed which would justify their abandonment.

But this is sentiment, and although the force of sentiment is not to be ignored in religion or in any human interest, it cannot be suffered to

determine altogether the policy of a great society such as the Christian Church. Our age is eminently practical, and it asks, what purpose, besides the gratifying of sentiment, is served by perpetuating the use of ancient forms which were made for another and wholly different order of things ?

(1) I answer in the first place that these venerable confessions of Christian faith make for union among Christians who are separated from one another by the present divisions of Christendom. There are few assemblies of English Christians in which it would not be possible for members of various denominations to recite together the Apostles' Creed. Some might refuse to be bound by it, or to adopt it into their own order of worship, but few would refuse to recite it in common with the rest of their fellow Christians. It has the prestige of great age, and it brings together in the fewest and simplest words the great fundamental verities of Christianity which all acknowledge. The same cannot be said of the "Nicene" Creed, chiefly, perhaps, because, to those who are not acquainted with its history and exact meaning, it suggests the dogmatism of a dead theology. Yet the importance of the

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“ Nicene ” Creed as a unifying force in Christendom is incalculable. This Creed is still the common property of the three great historical communions, the Greek, the Roman, and the Anglican ; widely as they are divided, they have herein a meeting-ground ; and whenever the reunion of Christendom becomes a matter of practical politics, as some day, please God, it will, it is round this great and truly Catholic Creed that East and West will gather and join hands again.* The ancient Creeds, but especially the “ Nicene ” Creed, will offer the best basis for the restoration of our broken unity ; and no Christian whose heart echoes our Lord’s prayer “ that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe,” † should consent to the silencing of their voice ; it is one of the few voices that in the Babel of our modern life call for peace and fellowship on the basis of a common faith.

* The addition of *Filioque* by the West is a detail which will not prevent reunion when once the Churches are drawn together by a real desire for unity. There will be needed only a frank admission on the part of the Western Church that the words ought never to have been added without the consent of the East, and an equally frank recognition on the part of the East that they admit of a sense which is orthodox and true.

† St. John xvii. 21.

(2) The ancient Creeds, then, may well be in the future one of the chief instruments for bringing about the reunion of Christendom. Meanwhile they are of great value to our modern life as presenting definite statements as to the contents of the Christian faith—statements sanctioned by the consent of the great majority of Christians from the early days of the Church to the present time. The modern mind, while it demands definiteness in science and history, resents it in religion, which, it seems to think, should content itself with the vaguest aspirations after the Unknown. But the genius of Christianity, as it was preached by our Lord and the Apostles, is opposed to indefiniteness; the religion of Christ rests on definite facts, and proclaims definite doctrines. And the Creeds accordingly state quite plainly what every Christian or every communicant must believe. In the second century, when the Apostles' Creed had its birth, there was no middle course between belief and unbelief; a man was either a believer or he was not, and if he believed, he accepted and confessed the Faith with a complete disregard of consequences. The old Roman Creed, so far as it goes, is therefore a very straightforward, uncompromising summary of the things

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which the Church believed and the world refused to believe ; and its explicitness has a real value at the present time. Equally valuable are its brevity and simplicity ; it demands from the baptized layman no more than is essential to a healthy Christian life. It states quite distinctly the indispensable minimum. No man can live on less ; no man who holds the Apostles' Creed can be far from the original Gospel and the faith of the Apostles who preached it.

The " Nicene " Creed, the Creed of Communion, is more complex, embodying, as we have seen, the results of two great controversies which raged throughout the Church in the fourth century, and reflecting in its language to some extent the philosophy of the age to which it belonged. To many moderns who accept the Apostles' Creed, the Creed of Constantinople will appear too explicit, too dogmatic ; defining where definition is not possible or not legitimate, speaking where Holy Scripture is silent, and early tradition is uncertain ; pursuing lines of thought which our present knowledge does not enable us to follow. Why, it may be asked, should our age be bound by the decisions of Councils held more than fifteen centuries ago ? Why force upon the Church of the twentieth

century the philosophy and terminology of the fourth? The objection is plausible, but it shows an impatience which is one of the defects of an age of rapid movement. It overlooks the fact that the Church has a continuous life, the life of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, and that we cannot cut ourselves loose and drift away from the great results of the past without serious loss and possible disaster. We are heirs of the past, and our present thought and knowledge are the product of all the ages. It is hardly possible to speak or think on any religious subject without being influenced, both in thought and language, by the results reached or the terms adopted by former generations. The man in the street, when he delivers his judgements on theological matters, little knows how much he owes to the makers of theology in the past. Among these the theologians of the century which produced the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds hold a foremost place; it was given to these men, under the stress and strain of an age when vital issues were being determined, to put into the language of their time the interpretation which the experience of the Church had led her to place upon the New Testament doctrines of the Son

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and the Spirit of God. From that interpretation the Church as a whole has never swerved, and it is the office of the " Nicene " Creed to keep it alive in the modern world. It is not the terminology of Nicæa and Constantinople for which we contend ; let the modern Church find, if she can, more suitable terms to express the same great spiritual facts. But let the ancient Creed be left intact ; it possesses a sublimity, which, with all deference to the progress of human thought, neither this nor any later generation is likely to excel.

3. The Church, then, rightly clings to the ancient Creeds, not only because they are venerable documents which she finds in possession of the field of Christian thought, but because they make for unity, and may one day form the basis of reunion ; and further, because meanwhile they guard the definite faith of the original Gospel, and express it in language which is at once precise and sublime. But at this point we are met by a claim, while retaining both the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, to re-interpret them in such a manner as to bring them into consonance with modern thought. There are those who say, By all means keep the Creeds, and recite the time-

honoured words in the Divine Service, at the font, and at the Eucharist ; but do not impose on us the necessity of interpreting them as they have been interpreted in the past, and are now interpreted by the majority of those who use them. If we retain the forms, we do so on the understanding that we are permitted to place upon certain words, without the imputation of insincerity, a meaning which is not their literal sense, and which was not contemplated by the men who composed the Creeds. This claim is now being made by scholars of repute, and it deserves the most respectful consideration. And it is relevant to my subject, for such a re-interpretation must, of course, deeply affect the place and office of the Creeds in modern life.

Let me first say that this claim, if allowed without reserve, reaches further than its supporters seem to recognize. It is easy to see what serious consequences might ensue if the " Nicene " Creed were thus re-interpreted. It will be within the memory of every student of Church History that no terms could be found to express the true Godhead of our Lord from which the Arians did not contrive to escape, until the introduction of the words " of one substance with the Father "

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brought them to a standstill.* Is it not conceivable that modern ingenuity may discover a re-interpretation even of those crucial phrases which baffled earlier doubters? It is not suggested that the eminent scholars who have claimed liberty to re-interpret the Creeds will take this course; they are all convinced adherents of the Nicene doctrine of the Person of the Son; but it is well to bear in mind the use which others may make of this liberty if it is conceded. For the present, however, the claim is made only in reference to the Apostles' Creed, and to certain of its articles; and to these, therefore, I shall confine my remarks.

According to the plain meaning and undoubted intention of the words, the Apostles' Creed affirms that the human life of the Son of God began and ended with miracle. At His entrance into the world He "was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary." "The third day" after His death and burial "He rose again from the dead." It is now claimed that both these articles may be interpreted in a non-miraculous sense. In this way, we are assured, "the greatest of all stumbling-blocks to the modern

* Cf. Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, p. 45 f.

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mind is removed ” ; * the miraculous, against which modern thought revolts, disappears from the Church’s Creed.

Let me point out that these two articles belong to the earliest form of the Creed. It cannot be pleaded that either of them is, like the words “ He descended into Hell,” the growth of a later age. Moreover, there is evidence that in asserting the miraculous Conception and Resurrection of our Lord they voice the convinced belief of Christians of the second century. Ignatius, the martyr Bishop from Syria, who, about 116, ended his life at Rome, writes : “ Jesus Christ was the Son of Mary . . . was truly born . . . truly raised from the dead ” ; † again, “ Our Lord . . . was truly born of a virgin ” ; ‡ “ Jesus the Christ was conceived in the womb by Mary . . . of the seed of David, but also of the Holy Ghost.” § Justin Martyr, who taught at Rome at a time when the Roman Creed was perhaps already in use, is yet more explicit : “ The power of God came upon the Virgin and overshadowed her, and, virgin as she was, made her to conceive.” ||

* Dr. Sanday, *Bishop Gore’s Challenge to Criticism*, p. 30.

† Ign. *Trall.* 9.

‡ Smyrn. 1.

§ Eph. 18.

|| Justin, *Apol.* i. 33.

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An early tract on the Resurrection, attributed to Justin, and certainly not much later than his time, says : “ He raised His body, therein confirming the promise of life. . . . He rose in the flesh that suffered.” * The Creed, then, faithfully reflects the belief of the Early Church when it asserts that our Lord was miraculously born and miraculously raised from the dead. That it insists on these two miracles is the more remarkable, because it makes no mention of the other miracles of the Gospels. Neither the Apostles’ Creed nor the Nicene expressly requires belief in the Feeding of the Five Thousand or the Raising of Lazarus as an essential article of faith. If you are brought by your own examination of the records, or by the arguments of others, to doubt the story of the Walking on the Sea, the Creeds, so far as regards their explicit demands upon faith, leave you free to do so. I am not defending such doubts, or saying that they can be cherished without grave loss and injury ; but they do not bring the doubter into direct conflict with either the Creed of Baptism or the Creed of Communion. The Creeds, as we have seen, exact a minimum ; but to that minimum the two great miracles of the

* *De resurr.* fragm. 9.

Incarnate Life, the Conception, and the Resurrection, have belonged from the beginning.

But miracles, even those two which from the first have been closely associated with the faith of the Incarnation, cannot, it is said, be maintained in the light of modern knowledge. It follows that those articles of the Creed which assert the Miraculous Conception and the Miraculous Resurrection must be re-interpreted, in such a sense that the miracles shall disappear. The "central reality" of these events is to be retained, but the facts are, if I rightly understand, to be resolved into happenings in the spiritual, not in the physical, order. Nothing must be allowed to disturb our sense of "the beautiful regularity that we see around us,"* or the conviction that it "has been, and will be, the law of the Divine action from the beginning to the end of time." The Creeds must be re-interpreted in such a manner as to exclude any departure from the normal order of Nature. The alternative is to abandon the ancient Creeds, or the articles which conflict with the modern rejection of miracle, and this our modernist leaders happily are not prepared to do.

* Dr. Sanday, *l.c.*

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Dr. Sanday, in his recent reply to the Bishop of Oxford, draws a sharp distinction between the Supernatural and (if the word may be allowed) the Contranatural,* and, if I understand him rightly, he places the Miraculous Conception and the Physical Resurrection under the latter category.† But no believer in the historical character of these two events will for a moment admit that they are in part or in whole *contra naturam*, or that any true miracle is such. There is, he will say, in this case, a supersession of the normal mode of the Divine working, and a consequent suspension of the normal mode, but not a contradiction. And he will ask himself whether if such a departure from the normal mode can occur (and to deny this is to deny the freedom of the Divine Will), there was not an occasion for it when the Eternal Word was made man; ‡ and again, when, being man, He became subject to death. The entrance of a Divine

* P. 26.

† P. 27: "the *contra naturam* element was only a part—and, I may be permitted to say, a small part—of these great events."

‡ As Dr. Sanday wrote in 1905 (*Outlines of the Life of Christ*, p. 114): "If we still believe that Christ was God . . . there will be nothing to surprise us in the phenomena of miracles."

Person such as the Church believes our Lord to be, of God's only Son, into permanent union with human nature, and into contact in that nature with the visible order of the world, was an absolutely unique event, calling for a unique manifestation of the Divine working in Nature. The wonder would have been if such a Person had been born after the manner of all men ; if His Incarnation had been attended by no sign of His superhuman origin. And the Resurrection, as a physical fact, is entirely in harmony with His Supernatural Conception. Granting the truth of the Incarnation and the Conception by the Holy Spirit, it is unthinkable that the Body so formed, and united from the first with the Person of the Logos, could have seen corruption, and lain in the tomb until it was mingled with the dust of Palestine. He who in order to preserve a mechanical uniformity of Nature believes this, believes a wonder greater than that which the Creed confesses when it plainly says, " The third day He rose again."

But it is urged that some re-interpretation of the Creed is clearly necessary, and if so, why not here ? A later age must be held free, if it retains an ancient formula, to read into its words a

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meaning which the second century compilers did not and could not contemplate. This is done, in fact, by almost all educated Christians in the case of certain other articles in the Apostles' Creed. No one in these days thinks of heaven as a locality above the skies into which the Body of the Lord was carried up, or interprets literally His session at the right hand of God. Few are now found to regard the Resurrection as a simple re-animation of the lifeless body, or the Second Coming as a coming in the clouds, visible to the natural eye. A similar liberty is demanded for those who go a step further and interpret the Conception and the Resurrection in such a manner as to set them free from the necessity of believing in the miraculous.

Let it be granted at once that some re-interpretation of the Creeds, and of the New Testament itself, is from time to time not only permissible, but necessary. In an age of movement and discovery such as our own, it is the duty of the Church to bring the unchangeable faith of the Gospel into relation with the revelations of science and research. It is a mark of vitality in the Church that she is able, without sacrificing truth, to adapt her expression of it to the needs of

each age as it succeeds to those that have gone before. The task is a delicate one, but not impracticable, nor ought it to be distasteful to believers in Christ. Those who realize that all Truth is one, and that it is the One Spirit of Christ who reveals it, will welcome new light from whatever source it comes, even though it may compel us to abandon interpretations of the letter of Scripture and the Creeds which have long prevailed. With this conviction the Church can afford to await with perfect calmness the results of attempts made by Christian students to adjust the ancient Creeds to modern thought ; such attempts may not be immediately successful, but they are not illegitimate if they are made in the spirit of reverence and humility, and with due regard to the foundation truths of the Christian faith, such as the Incarnation and the Resurrection of our Lord.

But it is not a mere re-interpretation of the Creed which is now proposed ; it is a denial of the literal truth of the historical facts which the Creed confesses. The Creed—let me say the Creeds—for the Creed of Constantinople is here in substantial agreement with the earlier Creed of Rome—the Creeds say plainly that our Lord was the

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Son of a virgin mother, and that His Conception or His Incarnation was of the Holy Ghost. This is to assert that His entrance into the world was not according to the ordinary course of nature. The words will bear no other sense, and to interpret them otherwise is simply to deny that they are historically true. Similarly the Resurrection article is practically denied when the words "the third day He rose again from the dead" are tortured into some such sense as this: On the third day He began to proclaim His victory over death by manifestations due to telepathy or some similar cause.*

If the Creeds are to hold their place in modern life, they must find a better apology than this. *Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis Tempus egit.* The modern mind is averse from miracle, but it is still more resentful of that which it conceives to be a tampering with the plain meaning of words. It is not the miracles of the Conception and the Resurrection that constitute the ultimate difficulty in the way of this age when it is asked

* Cf. *Foundations*, p. 136: "Possibly through some psychological channel similar to that which explains the mysterious means of communication between persons commonly known as telepathy."

to accept the Christian faith. The difficulty lies further back, in the Incarnation itself. And the Incarnation is the very centre of the Faith. If you abandon it, you cut the heart out of the Creeds and of the Church herself.

The Creeds, let it be plainly said, stand for a miraculous Christianity, because they stand for the truth of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. They do not stop to speak of the miracles of the incarnate life on earth ; they pass over in silence the whole story of that life, going direct from Bethlehem to Calvary, from the Birth of Jesus Christ to His Death. Their purpose is to concentrate attention on His Person and redeeming work. The Person of Christ is itself the miracle of miracles. Believe in Him as the Word made Flesh, they seem to say, and the subsidiary miracles will fall into their place, as guards of honour and salutes of artillery announce the progress of a King.

No genuine re-interpretation of the Creeds can exclude miracle. They are here, in our modern life, to bear witness to it. Human life, in modern as in ancient times, demands a Redeemer who is not the mere product of His own age, or of all the ages, but One who has come down from

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heaven and returned to heaven, a Person of supernatural origin and supernatural destiny, whose entrance into the world and exit from it were fitly accompanied by supernatural events, and indeed could not, so far as we can judge, have been effected by the ordinary processes of nature. The Creeds, following herein the New Testament, "stand for" miracle ; they express the conviction that the world is not an automaton, governed by inflexible laws which allow no intervention by a Sovereign Will ; that there is no inconsistency between the orderly evolution of Nature and the immanence of the Logos in the cosmos, or His supernatural union with our human flesh. Their witness to these things is beyond value in an age which is rapidly losing its sense of a Living God ; and the Church can render no greater service than by holding fast the form of sound words which she has inherited, and inspiring modern life with the simple faith and buoyant hope which animated the generation that gave us the first draft of the Apostles' Creed.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

Some readers may wish to see the originals of the two great Creeds. They are printed accordingly below.

THE OLD ROMAN CREED.

Credo in Deum patrem omnipotentem, et in Christum Iesum filium eius unicum, dominum nostrum, qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto et Maria virgine, crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato et sepultus; tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit in caelos, sedet ad dexteram patris, inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. Et in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam ecclesiam, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem.

THE LATER APOSTLES' CREED.

Credo in Deum patrem omnipotentem, creatorem caeli et terrae, et in Iesum Christum filium eius unicum, dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria virgine, passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus; descendit ad inferna, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei patris omnipotentis, inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, vitam aeternam.

THE CREED OF NICAEA.

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν πατέρα παντοκράτορα, πάντων δρατῶν τε καὶ ἀοράτων ποιητήν. Καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς μονογενῆ, τουτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, ἀληθινόν, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ· τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ

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διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα, ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, παθόντα, καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, ἀνελθόντα εἰς οὐρανοὺς, καὶ ἐρχόμενον κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς. Καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα.

THE CREED OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν πατέρα παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων. Καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο· τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα, καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς· οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος. Καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν· εἰς μίαν ἁγίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν· ὁμολογοῦμεν ἓν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν· προσδοκῶμεν ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος.

THE END

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